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ABSTRACT

In the 1992-93 academic year, the Hospitality and Food Sciences Department at South Seattle Community College conducted surveys of current and former students and local foodservice employers to determine the level of satisfaction with Department programs. Specifically, the surveys focused on four key outcomes: determining the extent to which programs met training and upgrading needs of the commercial food and hospitality industry; determining the feasibility of a restaurant management program; activating an Alumni Association; and assessing the extent to which students feel their training is valid, useful, and leads to professional advancement. Surveys were administered or mailed to 53 current students mid-way through their certificate program, 500 alumni and former students, and 750 hospitality industry establishments. Survey results, based on responses from all 53 current students, 79 former students, and 148 businesses, included the following: (1) 81% of current students felt that the training they had received so far was useful to at least an adequate extent; (2) only 23% felt that program complexity was adequately explained upon entry to the program; (3) 66% of the former students were working in the food service industry, with 89% indicating that they had achieved their goals to some extent; and (4) for food service employers, the most important skills for employees were communication skills. The study concluded that the Department was meeting the initial training needs of industry, but not its upgrade needs; that there was not conclusive evidence for the restaurant management program; and that there was support for the Alumni Association. (KP)

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ED 381 218

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT PROCESS
1992-93

HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

FOOD SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

FOOD PRODUCTION PROGRAM
FOOD PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
PASTRY AND SPECIALTY BAKING PROGRAM

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SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Outcomes and Assessment Methods

In the Spring of 1992, the Hospitality and Food Sciences Assessment/Outcomes Committee identified six outcomes. These outcomes and the methods for assessing them are summarized in the following table:

Outcomes	Assessment Methods
1. The department will determine the extent to which their programs meet the initial training and upgrading needs of the commercial food and hospitality industry. [Special interest areas include nutritional applications, ethnic cuisine, evening specialty courses, and restaurant management training (see below).]	• Food Industry Survey • Alumni/Former Student Survey
2. The department will determine the feasibility of offering a restaurant management program.	• Food Industry Survey • Alumni and Former Student Survey
3. The department will develop a funding plan to build a kitchen for the Rainier Dining Room.	• To be pursued separately from assessment process
4. The department will activate the Hospitality and Food Sciences Alumni Association.	• Alumni and Former Student Survey • Departmental mailing
5. The department will develop a marketing plan to increase its visibility and promote an image of a quality training and food production facility to: 1. the food and hospitality industry 2. potential students 3. potential consumers 4. potential donors 5. its own alumni	• Focus groups • Faculty/staff meetings • Develop and distribute at least one marketing instrument (i.e. flier)
6. The department's students will feel that the training they receive at SSCC is valid, useful, and will lead to professional advancement.	• Alumni and Former Student Survey • Mid-Certificate Student Survey • Exit interviews or surveys of graduating students

Outcomes 1, 2, 4, and 6 were addressed during the 1992-93 academic year. The committee elected to address outcomes 3 and 5 at some point in the future; discussions which concerned exploration of these two outcomes are summarized in the review of strategic planning.

Assessment Instruments and Preliminary Findings

In the 1992-93 academic year, the Hospitality and Food Sciences Department developed three survey instruments to determine their success in meeting the above outcomes. One survey was administered to current students midway through their certificate program; another was administered to alumni and former students; an industry survey was mailed to owners and managers of foodservice establishments.

Mid-Certificate Student Survey

This two-page survey was administered to 53 Hospitality and Food Sciences students by one of their instructors during the first week of March 1993.

Findings revealed that the majority of these students felt that they have made progress--at least "to an adequate extent"--in the following areas: levels of service (skill) they provide on the job, a better understanding of safety factors, improved knife-handling skills, a better understanding of culinary terms, improved knowledge about sanitation, improved "sense of urgency," and improved speed.

Forty-six percent felt that the training they have received is valid and useful "to a great extent"; 81% indicated "to an adequate extent" or more. Thirty-nine percent indicated "a great extent" of confidence that the training they have received at SSCC will lead to professional advancement; 84% indicated "to an adequate extent" or more. Most students were satisfied with the program's quality of instruction: 25% "to a great extent," 33% "to an adequate extent," and 35% "somewhat." Only 8% were "minimally satisfied."

Survey results also showed that 80% of the students had changed their career goals since entering the program. There was an ironic aspect to this change in that while the largest percentage of students initially aspired to be cooks (27%), by mid-certification the largest percentage of students wanted to own their own restaurant (26%), despite their instructors' warnings about the pitfalls of restaurant ownership. Sixty-nine percent nevertheless felt that the program assisted them in identifying realistic career goals.

Initial program advising was identified as an area where improvements need to be made. Fifty-nine percent of the students surveyed indicated they were treated positively during advising for their instructional program "to an adequate extent," and only 23% felt that the program complexity was explained to them "to an adequate extent." Only 36% felt that what they were led to believe about the program in counseling was actually true "to an adequate extent" or more.

Alumni and Former Student Survey

This survey was mailed to almost 500 Hospitality and Food Sciences alumni and former students who had either graduated since 1986 or who had left the program without completing it with 80 credits or more since 1988. Seventy-nine usable surveys were returned in May 1993--a 16% response rate.

Sixty-six percent of the respondents indicated they are working in the foodservice

industry. Among those in the industry, 42% are working in Upscale establishments and 16% in Family Dining or fast food. A surprising 42% indicated working in establishments for which no category was made. Among these "Others," a majority work in institutional foodservice.

Overall, the department's programs were rated very highly. Eighty-nine percent of the former students surveyed indicated that they had achieved their educational goals "to some extent" or more when they left SSCC; 55% said they had achieved their goals "to a high extent." Over 80% felt that the program prepared them to at least "some extent" for the intensity of the industry, employer expectations, and for better positions in employment. Over 85% felt that the program provided, "to some extent" or more, an industry-like operation, equipment comparable to industry specifications, and training reflecting current industry trends.

Almost three-fourths of the respondents said that they have used nutrition information "to some extent" or more in their work in the foodservice industry, and 84% agreed "to some extent" or more that the current 3-credit nutrition class should be extended to 5 credits.

This survey again identified advising as an area needing additional emphasis. Only 11% said that SSCC provides adequate advising regarding employment opportunities and market trends "to a high extent"; 60% indicated it was adequate "to some extent" or more. While 81% indicated that they did not use career counseling while in the program, 80% agreed "to a high extent" that students <u>should</u> receive career counseling.

<u>Food Industry Survey</u>

This seven-page survey was initially mailed to a random sample of 750 food and hospitality industry establishments in December 1992. A follow-up survey was sent in January 1993 to those who had failed to respond to the earlier mailing. These two solicitations generated a return of 148 usable surveys--a 20% return rate.

The respondents fell into the following self-identified categories:

- 50% Upscale [includes upscale (12%), casual (18%), white tablecloth (7%), hotel restaurant (12%), and private club (1%)]
- 24% Family Dining
- 26% Other [includes catering (8%), fast food (6%), buffet (3%), and other (8%)]

Survey results were initially analyzed as a complete sample in February 1993 and then reanalyzed by restaurant type (Upscale, Family Dining, and Other) and by ethnic versus non-ethnic cuisine in May 1993. This reanalyses, it was felt, gave the department a clearer idea as to the needs of the types of restaurants it was designed to serve.

Responses showed that the industry representatives feel the most important skill/knowledge considerations in hiring management and production personnel are communication skills--even more important than technical and production skills. Communication skills rated a mean of 4.6 on a scale of 1, "Not at all Important," to 5, "Of Extremely High Importance." The six other highest-rated skills were: customer relations (4.4),

production skills (4.3), technical/hands on skills (4.2), team building (4.2), interpersonal skills (4.1), and restaurant kitchen prep (4.1).

Survey results also indicated that industry representatives place high importance on professional culinary training in hiring supervisory and management personnel; 69% felt that it is of "high" (33%) or "extremely high" (36%) importance. Respondents also rated the need within their establishments for professionally educated supervisory and management personnel to be high; 65% said it was of "high" (32%) or "extremely high" (33%) importance.

Not surprisingly, the respondents who rated the highest importance and growth potential for ethnic menu items within their establishment were also those who identified their operation as being ethnically based. Eighty-nine percent of Upscale Ethnic and 83% of Family Ethnic establishments rated high importance of ethnic menu items, in contrast to 13% of Upscale Non-Ethnic and 5% of Family Non-Ethnic establishments.

While nutritional information was felt to be of at least moderate importance to a majority of the respondents, 60% also indicated that this information is seldom requested by customers. Thirty-two percent said the degree of consideration placed upon nutrition in their establishment was either "high" (21%) or "very high" (11%), with 75% rating it of at least "moderate importance." Fifty-eight percent indicated that it is of at least "medium importance" to supply nutritional information on the menu.

Committee Discussions of Survey Results

The Hospitality and Food Sciences Assessment/Outcomes Committee met together several times to discuss survey findings and the implications of these findings upon their specified student outcomes. Committee members reviewed the results of the Food Industry Survey on March 26, the Mid-Certificate Student Survey on April 13, and the Alumni and Former Student Survey on May 20, 1993. The following is a composite of key observations raised during those meetings as they relate to the Student Outcomes.

Outcome 1: The department will determine the extent to which their programs meet the initial training and retraining needs of the commercial food and hospitality industry. [Special interest areas include nutritional applications, ethnic cuisine, evening specialty courses, and restaurant management training (see also Outcome 2).]

The department concluded that, based on the results from the Food Industry Survey and the Alumni and Former Student Survey, the department was meeting the initial training needs of the industry, but it was not meeting the upgrading needs of the industry.

Industry reported interest in training and/or upgrading for their employees, but they expressed little commitment of time or resources. Employees would have to get the training on their own time with their own resources.

It was decided that more information is needed in the area of ethnic cuisine before curriculum recommendations can be made. There are currently no facilities, equipment, or training for ethnic food preparation, so greater depth as to the types of ethnic foods deemed to be important is especially needed.

The results of the Former Student Survey indicated alumni interest in upgrading in the following areas: Garde Manger; Communications Skills; Production Management; Pastry and Baking; Sous Chef; Service Management. The committee suggested some curriculum development in these areas by expanding the existing curriculum in increments to better meet the retraining needs of the industry (see Outcome 6).

Outcome 2: The department will determine the feasibility of offering a restaurant management program.

The committee concluded that the surveys did not determine conclusively whether or not such a program would be feasible. The consensus of the committee, however, was that such a program was not feasible at this time.

Outcome 4: The department will activate the Hospitality and Foods Sciences Alumni Association.

Eighty-two percent of respondents to the Alumni and Former Student Survey agreed to at least "some extent" that Alumni should participate in the Alumni Association; 46% agreed "to a high extent." Eighty-eight percent agreed that alumni should be involved in functions promoting mentoring programs. Based on these results, the committee felt that a mailing soliciting updated addresses and further commitment is warranted, and they will be pursuing these actions in 1994-95.

Outcome 6: The department's students will feel that the training they receive at SSCC is valid, useful and will lead to professional advancement.

The committee concluded, based on the responses from the Mid-Certificate Survey and the Former Student Survey, that the department does a good job with the technical training. On most items, over 80% of the students were satisfied with the training they received at SSCC.

Three problem areas were identified: Advising; Communication Skills; and General Education courses. These will be addressed in the next year.

The committee was especially struck by the fact that only 36% of students mid-way through the program felt that what their advising had led them to believe about the program was actually true "to an adequate extent." The consensus of the committee was that this is likely due to the program's complexity and intensity not being explained clearly enough, and they discussed various ways to improve the advising process and content.

Due to the feedback regarding advising received on the Mid-Certificate Student Survey and the Alumni and Former Student Survey, the department immediately restructured the advising procedure. Advising for prospective students interested in previewing the program is now scheduled for groups of students for specific times on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, rather than on an individual drop-in basis as in the past. It was felt that this would help standardize the sort of information students would receive and increase advising's ability to be thorough, consistent, and efficient.

Perhaps the biggest surprise resulting from the Food Industry Survey was the tremendous importance placed upon communication skills, and the committee discussed methods by which communication skills could be more effectively emphasized. Ideas included integrating communication, teambuilding, critical thinking, and human relations skills into the two-week instructional stations. Additionally, the department will consider replacing existing General Studies courses with college transfer courses in English Composition, math, and computer skills as part of the program. These areas will be addressed in the next year.

Summary of Strategic Planning Session

The committee met with independent consultant Steve Forman on May 24, 1993, to review their specified student outcomes, arrive at some consensus as to the implications of the survey data regarding those outcomes, and to develop some strategies for future change in the department. The following summarizes the ideas generated during those meetings and is arranged according to the outcomes those ideas addressed.

Outcome 1: The department will determine the extent to which their programs meet the initial training and retraining needs of the commercial food and hospitality industry. (Special interest areas include nutritional applications, ethnic cuisine, evening specialty courses and restaurant management training.)

The committee concluded that while they do meet the initial training needs of the commercial food and hospitality industry, the existing curriculum does not meet the retraining needs of the industry.

Industry reported interest in training for their employees but little commitment of time or money. Employees would have to get the training on their own time with their own resources.

Former students indicated interest in retraining in several areas:

- Garde Manger
- Communications, Teambuilding, and Human Relations Skills
- Pastry and Baking
- Sous Chef
- Dining Room Management

The committee suggested some curriculum development by expanding the existing curriculum in increments. Possible options would be to open the classes for management theory, FSD 105, and orientation into foods production, FSD 101, to about 15 students outside the program or who are foodservice industry personnel. Another suggestion was offering 1-2 day seminars in several areas.

The committee suggested keeping the core program and providing some options for further study. More work is needed to determine what these options would be and how they would be implemented.

The committee concluded that there was not a high degree of perceived demand by

foodservice industry representatives for a course on nutrition. However, 74% of respondents to the Former Student Survey indicated that have used nutritional information in the industry. The committee also feels that changes in the society, including new packaging requirements, will require changes in the industry, and the industry isn't prepared for these changes. They anticipate a sudden need for classes in this area in the near future, and they should be preparing for this change.

Outcome 2: The department will determine the feasibility of offering a restaurant management program.

The committee concluded that the surveys did not determine conclusively whether or not such a program would be feasible. The consensus of the committee, however, was that such a program was not feasible at this time. There was anecdotal information from both the Industry Survey and the Former Student Survey that there was not sufficient perceived need for such a program at this time.

The committee also noted that the restaurant management programs at Shoreline and Seattle Central Community Colleges were discontinued due to declining enrollment and that the program at Seattle University's Pullman branch campus would be discontinuing its program in Fall 1993 due to a loss of funding.

The committee speculated that employers look to graduates of 4-year schools to fill their management positions. Many of these managers lack technical culinary skills, and while they may see this as a problem, it is not recognized as a big enough problem in the industry.

Outcome 3: The department will develop a funding plan to build a kitchen for the Rainier Dining Room.

The committee chose not to address this outcome at this time. Instead, it will be pursued through the Fund Development campaign currently being conducted.

Outcome 4: The department will activate the Hospitality and Foods Sciences Alumni Association.

The committee are working on developing and updated mailing list. This outcome will be carried further next year.

Outcome 5: The department will develop a marketing plan to increase its visibility and promote an image of a quality training and food production facility to:

1. *the food and hospitality industry*
2. *potential students*
3. *potential consumers*
4. *potential donors*
5. *its own alumni*

The committee noted the need for the development of a marketing strategy for its programs. For example, the SSCC Food Science program is one of only 56 American Culinary Federation (ACF) certified training programs in the country, but this certification has not been

marketed to its full potential by the program. ACF lists our programs in their literature, which generates a couple of inquiries per year.

Another marketing tool which could be better utilized by the department is the comparatively low non-resident tuition. The tuition for the renowned Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, is approximately $23,000 for their 18-month program; comparatively, our non-resident tuition for one of our six-quarter certificate programs would be approximately $11,750. Resident tuition is even lower at $3,150.

Additional full-time program marketing could be achieved through technical seminars and professional upgrade courses as an avenue to increasing industry awareness of our existing programs.

This outcome will be explored next year.

Outcome 6: The department's students will feel that the training they receive at SSCC is valid, useful and will lead to professional advancement.

The committee concluded from the evidence available from the Mid-Certificate, Former Student, and Industry surveys, that they do a good job with the technical training. On most items, over 80% of the students were satisfied.

Three problem areas identified were:

- Advising
- Communication Skills
- General Education Courses

As noted above, the department has already instituted some improvements in the advising process by scheduling specific times on Tuesdays and Thursdays for interested students to learn about the program. This procedure was reviewed and found to be operating effectively so far.